THE

DIVINE ORACLES

CONSULTED:

OR

AN APPEAL

TO

THE LAW AND TESTIMONY.

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TO THE READER.

TO contradict and hurt the feelings of good men, is not pleasant to the author, who loves friendship; but a public character, in a civil or a religious capacity, acting from principle of duty, should always be borne with. The treatise before you may have a different effect on men of different sentiments; seeing that religious characters are not as they were in the beginning, viz. "of one heart, and of one mind." The author can assure the reader, that if he knows himself, he is moved by principle of duty; hoping, that if some be displeased, many others, who are not warped, but judge like those who have not made up their minds, such may be benefited, provided the author be tolerably correct. You are solicited to read in a cool dispassionate spirit, and be not too hasty in passing sentence. If you should condemn the work, have mercy on the author—who will solemnly appeal to "the Law and Testimony." The writing is delivered in short sentences, by reason, plain

texts are passed over. It is not wrote like lecturing. The language is plain, like the author, suited to the common people. Try to memorize the subject, as to the scope of it, and treat it as you think just, for it is in your hands. Remember the just Judge when he comes will burn up error, but save what is pure. The closer we follow the truth, the purer we shall be, and the sooner be prepared for happiness. Every word of God is pure. "Add not." The pure stream is deeply impregnated with human invention.

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MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

This evengelical inspired author, called from the custom house to be an apostle, introduces his narrative of glad tidings to all people, by giving us a sketch of the Redeemer's pedigree, according to the flesh: but, as the prophet saith, Who shall declare his generation? The answer is, (according to his divine origin) he is from everlasting, to everlasting, not fully known to men or angels! But as touching his humanity, he was born a Jew, from an elect royal line, or family, as is set down in the book; not so as to enumerate every individual, who succeeded each other, but dividing them into forty-two generations. This blessed Jesus was the seed promised to our father Adam; whereby his soul was pardoned, and of course all his offspring: as it is written, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." The sacred history farther reports, that this holy virgin Mary, of the royal family, was promised to a worthy man of the same line, whose name was Joseph; but before their marriage, it was discovered that Mary was pregnant, when Joseph intended to separate himself from her in a private manner. But the holy angel revealed the secret to him, as it is written—read the story. And it came to pass some time after the birth of Jesus, that a company of astronomers came up from the east country, under the impression of the holy spirit, and by the movement of a new star; they came to the house where the holy babe lay; and with confidence inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" Conceal him not, we have seen his star, and are come to wor-

ship him! Wise men do worship Jesus, because he is "God with us." These things roused the feelings of old Herod, who caused a multitude of innocent little boys to be martyred! This brings me to the third chapter.

CHAPTER III.

HERE goes on a report respecting John, the Hebrew prophet, sent before to convince, correct, reform, and prepare the way for the Lord, and his new kingdom: which was near at hand.

As John followed baptizing, he was called Baptist. Many disputes have been about John and his baptism, from his first cry in the wilderness until now. In fact, he was a chosen vessel, set apart from the womb, for a certain purpose. He lived and died near the close of the legal dispensation. He proclaimed the new kingdom to be near at hand. He was as a link between the two dispensations; and, indeed, he was a very laudable preface! Yet, as he was not an apostle, nor did he live under the new dispensation, nor had the Lord yet offered himself to the Jews, neither had the divine spirit come according to the new kingdom, (for the spirit was not to be poured out until after the divine humanity was glorified,) John vii, 39. Therefore, christians have no more to do with John's baptism, than with the Jewish passover. John prophesied of his decrease, as the old kingdom closed; and how the Lord and the new kingdom would increase. After our Lord commenced the public speaker, he raised disciples distinct from John's, and they were baptized with a baptism higher than John's, for these were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. But at Penticost the christian baptism commenced, viz. in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! *Amen.* Our Lord's baptism was at a proper age, and at a proper place, even the river of Judgment, done by a proper person. This was in order for his consecration, in conformity to the order of the priesthood; but, although he was baptised by John, it was not according to John's baptism "unto repentance." Moreover, it was the order of baptising, or consecrating the high priests, who were consecrated with water and oil; but only the hands and feet, were baptised in the water; then as he came up out of the water, the oil was poured on the head. Now you have it!

CHAPTER IV.

This chapter needs only to be read, for it requires very little explanation; as it treats on the temptations our Lord passed through with glorious victory. I shall only make a few remarks.

First. The divine operations of the Holy Ghost led him into the wilderness, to be tempted.

Secondly. Our Lord showed man's noble creation, whose soul could feed, grow and thrive—yea, live for ever on the word of God!

Thirdly. Satan discovered his unpardonable sin, viz. he willed to be worshipped: but when he proposed for the Lord to worship him, I call that the impudence of the devil!!! Yea, and all the miserable, who sink to hell, will have to worship the devil!

Fourth remark. When Satan brought scripture to back his temptation, our Lord produced another text, and Satan could not reconcile them. This is like unto the long dispute between John Calvin, and James Arminius; for one text may seem to say, a convert cannot fall entirely away—another text speaks as if we may certainly fall away, and perish! Then seeing, no scripture hath any private interpretation, I suppose it impossible to show the scripture texts in harmony without throwing in the condition. "He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly," &c. And it came to pass after our Lord had defeated Satan, Jesus returned to Jerusalem at a time people were collected for divine service; then our Lord commenced public preaching; opened the Bible and read his text, viz. Isaiah lxi. 1, &c. Reader, pause a moment. "From that time, Jesus began to preach"—saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand:" not yet come. How say some, that John began the new dispensation?

CHAPTERS V & VI.

Let this portion be read with solemn attention, and let the reader examine himself, whether he comes under the character of the blessed.

Nothing is here hard to be understood, as to the *letter;* and as to the *experience,* that the Lord only can interpret. Let the disciple mind, that if his spirit be lit as the candle of the

Lord, that the light in his understanding will be displayed in a holy life, and godly conversation. Moreover, remember, that grace comes under the lively similitude of salt, which is a preservative to flesh, as grace is to the soul, to save it from corruption. Had there been ten gracious people in Sodom, the city would have been spared. Salt is that active substance, as some say, which giveth consistence to all bodies, by causing them to be preserved from corruption; causing the variety of tastes: yet by long exposure to wind, sun and weather, salt may lose its savour, i. e. become insipid, and of no value. So are all those who make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience! Our glorious Lord well understood similitudes. Those who fall away from Christ and religion, are disqualified for religious, or civil society: so their last state is worse than the first!

As to the sixth chapter, it is plain and easy to understand, at least the greater part may be understood without an interpreter. The moral law is explained in its primitive lustre, which shows it to be spiritual, as well as literal; so that a sinner may justly be condemned for adultery, and murder, although never reduced to action! Reader, I wish you to take notice, that self-murder is the most inhuman, and cruel of all murder. To murder parents, wife and children, as some men have done, appears the height of savage cruelty; but, for a man in cool blood, with his own hand, by throat-cutting, a rope, a hot ball, or to strangle in the merciless stream; to torture his own flesh, that he ought, in a right way, to love and nourish; is murder, and cruelty in the extreme! He not only dies like a fool, but he dies in the devil—and awakes, where? From such a death good Lord deliver me, and all the human family. Reader, you may think yourself in no danger of such an infernal act; take heed, watch and pray, forsake sin, nor give place for a moment to the devil.

Reader, you will notice the 25th verse, relative to that saying, "Agree with thine adversary quickly," &c. An adversary is an antagonist, or opponent; this adversary is not thy God, nor does it in this place refer to Satan, but it refers to an offended brother, or neighbour, as the two preceding verses will abundantly show. In the order of common law, if, in any case, you have in any wise injured a man, but he intends to run the law upon you, and not retaliate himself, you being inwardly convinced

you will be cast; then the judge will order the officer to cast you into prison. Thus, it would be wisdom in you to go speedily and try for a reconciliation. By the same rule, if you wrong any person, who will not retaliate, but leave his cause with God; then cast your eyes on the first epistle and fourth chapter to the Thessalonians, and 6th verse, where it is thus recorded, in the divine law: Let no man defraud his brother, in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such! Therefore, labour to atone, or, by suitable acknowledgements, reconcile thy injured neighbour, before his complaint is lodged before the great Judge, and you be cast into the hot prison!

In the close of the fifth chapter, we are taught the doctrine of christian perfection, which is perfect love to God, and good will to all men. In chapter vi, you will read, that putting away wives is a hateful thing, and unlawful, except for one cause. Yet, if a wife is cruelly abused, or in danger of her life—no doubt she may depart, so she remain virtuous.

If a divorce may be given in a lawful manner, I should think the judiciary department should be applied to, who should act according to the laws enacted by the legislative body.

CHAPTER VII.

In this section we read how hard it appears for a returning sinner to deny self, resist the devil, become small and sufficiently humbled to rush through the narrow gate, and be translated into the kingdom of righteousness, joy and peace. Hear another parable, comparing men to trees, both good and bad. But the pure law pronounces all bad; for none are good—no not one. Nevertheless, by digging and manuring, the bad fig-tree could be made to bear. Luke xiii. Thus, a bad man, by grace can be made good: and a good man may turn back to sin and folly, and become bad again, as backsliders do abundantly prove. The interpretation may be this, note. A fruit tree holds its seed, or essence in itself; see Gen. i. 11. from thence it produces fruit in conformity to its natural seed; whether a horse apple or a sweet apple. Therefore, the carnal-minded natural man, whose heart is wicked and deceitful, cannot bear good fruit before God. But grace can renew this bad man, give

him a new heart, and renew a right spirit within him; so he is born of God, and that by the word of God, and the word is the seed in the heart of the new creature; he being influenced by the good spirit, how can he bear evil fruit? The seed, is the word of God, sown in his heart; and by taking root downward, it bears fruit upward. John observes, he cannot sin because the seed abideth within. Not because a convert is irresistibly kept; he possesseth power to do wrong, but has no will to do it. Joseph asked his base mistress how he could act wickedly and sin against God? Now if a good man can never change, but remains immutable, and the seed can never depart—then "once in Christ, always in Christ," is a true saying. Read John xv. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," &c. &c. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!"

CHAPTERS XVIII, IX, X.

A few remarks may suffice.

First. Our Lord observed that many pious Gentiles, like Cornelius, who were influenced by the great Spirit, which is the quickening power, that such people who feared God, and worked righteousness, should sit down in the kingdom, and the professing Jews and backsliding christians, who had enjoyed great and glorious privileges, would be shut out.

When Jesus rebuked the wind, and the sea, and they obeyed him, the people exclaimed, saying, What manner of man is this? Were I to answer the interrogative, I would say, Emanuel—God with us. Note, the parable of the old and new bottles, old and new cloth, which bears the following interpretation; the bottles were leather, and when they waxed old, new wine in its fermental state, the bottles being well stopped, would burst. And strong new cloth edged to old rotten cloth, would make the rent worse. The similitude is this; it will not answer to put new spiritual religion in old deceitful unrenewed hearts: nor to blend the old levitical rites with new gospel substances. Some fell from grace in Galla by such corrupt ideas.

Reader, pay attention to the close of the ninth chapter; directions are here given to all sober minded bodies of christian people, who are desirous to hear the word, and have but few labourers; not to join error for the sake of

preachers; but earnestly pray the Lord Jesus to send them preachers; and when they come, they will be pure preachers; by their words and their works you may know them. They will preach the pure word, according to godliness; men of holy lives, meek and lowly, men of one book, steady to their Master's business. They will not be hirelings, but learn to be content with what their friends will freely give them, as they feel it their duty. Not as lords over their Master's vineyard, but public servants for Jesus' sake; loving, equal brothers; yet they will be acknowledged as overlookers, and official men in the house of God. Some pray to colleges, presbyteries, and conferences to send them preachers, but the best way is to petition the King of heaven. The true ministers are called of God, i. e. Christ, who is Lord of the harvest. Some are called by men, and money; I will not say that Christ never called such at first. Let no man be offended, I could say more, but a word to the wise is enough. The best ministers are those called of God, and continue to act under the influence of his spirit. The Lord selected twelve ministers, whom he named apostles, as being called and sent out by his own person; whom he appointed to write his will, at least two thirds of them. To them he gave the key of the kingdom, or spirit of inspiration, whereby they could open mysteries, never so clearly understood before! They wrote so much and no more; and what they have written is recorded in heaven! Others were sent to preach, and do the work of an evangelist, that was to carry the apostles writings, and deposit the same among the friends of Jesus; which were ordered to be read in the churches as their only *rule book* of faith and government! *Amen.*

CHAPTERS XI, XII.

THE more light we have, and do not improve it, the greater will be our condemnation; even Sodom will rise in judgment against gospel slighters! My dear reader, make no further delay, but follow the light, lest eternal darkness should ensue! Pay close attention to the 27th verse, notice the oneness, the mysterious and reciprocal union subsisting between the humanity and divinity of one Lord God. In verse the 12th, we should pay attention to the word of the Lord in disputing with the Jews about the Sabbath, that

even under the strict letter of the law, the Lord justified all merciful acts of kindness to man or beast; and to try to prepare food to eat if distressed with hunger. The Lord Jesus being the Lord of the Sabbath, it appears then, we may reverence the old Sabbath in its time and place, yet adopt the Lord's day for the christian Sabbath, which exactly fits the new dispensation. Alas! alas! how shamefully do people in christendom trample upon the authority, and profane the sanctity of the Lord's day! Some are secretly doing business that otherwise would be to do on Monday. Others are gathered in parties for feasting and drinking; and the poor slaves are labouring in the cookery. Their loose conversation shows their tongues are unbridled, and in the multitude of their vain talk, and much laughter, they commit abundance of sin. The common youngsters are sporting, playing, gambling, disputing, wrestling, swearing, fighting, &c. well wearied at night, and need rest! Others make use of that spare day to set at the grogshops. O! tell it not among the East India rude infidels! When the Lord of the Sabbath cometh, he will put a stop to it. Where are civil rulers? where are the magistrates? We hear the name, but are they a terror to evil doers? Are these God's civil ministers who bear the sword? O ye Sabbath breakers, despisers of the glorious Jesus, doth not your flesh tremble for fear of him? Doth your hearts ake when you think of meeting him, on his fiery judgment seat, with his countenance like flashes of lightning? Reform, repent, before it is too late, verse 20. A bruised reed is a broken contrite heart; such a one the Lord will deal tenderly with, and those warm desires will be kindled to a flame.

Our Lord spake of the unpardonable sin being against the Holy Ghost! In the loose opinions of fallen man, he might be brought to suppose, if there be three distinct persons in the one God, that the Holy Ghost must be the greatest; but let it be remembered, that the Holy Ghost is God in operation. God is a spirit, and there is one Holy Spirit, and that the Lord Jesus possessed without measure!

Note. Through this eternal spirit he offered up the great sacrifice to his *divinity*. Thus, for a person convinced by light in his understanding, yet bitterly to resist the truth, which he feels to be pointed against him; he is offended at the light, which is truth; his opposition rises to malice in the heart, ambition in his will; his carnal enmity, by giv-

ing place to the devil, genders into infernal hatred against God, his ways and his people! ready to attribute the work of God to the devil—dispitefully resists the spirit, and cries against his enlightened soul! Such infernal wickedness can never be forgiven in the law-world, that then existed, nor in the gospel-world then to come! Christ died not for that sin; neither intercedes for such. A man in that state is illustrated in the following parable, viz. When the unclean spirit, even the spirit of idolatry, with other filthy desires, is gone out of a man, he (the spirit) walketh through dry places—that is, *Jejune*, dreary, barren, no moisture—not a drop of consolation—seeking rest in vain; gloomy, dismal. I have seen the like of this in a human creature, much deranged, and in black despair; when hope is fled, and Satan helps on despair, they sink into the nature of Satan; they hate God and every thing that's good; and are totally emptied of all divine impressions. But to return to talk about the unclean spirit, who explores this fallen world, as high as the air, as wide as space, as deep as hell, in perpetual torments; every where he goes he feels hellfire; always full of great wrath. If there be any sort of satisfaction that such a spirit can feel, it is when he can be venting his infernal malice on man, or even a beast, or ever on the lost souls of the human family! In the days of yore, demons could torment men's bodies, before the gospel dispensation took place. The text reads as if the unclean spirit went out of the man of his own will; but we may expect when light and truth enters, darkness and the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, is obliged to depart, and can never return, unless we give place. The unclean spirit discovered the situation of the man's soul where he in operation once dwelt: he views the house swept of all gracious impressions, garnished with vain glory, self-righteousness; Christ shut out, and rejected; an open door, no watch kept; the unclean spirit knowing that he was too weak alone to keep that palace, he collects seven wicked spirits, (seven is a perfect number,) these more horribly wicked than the unclean spirit; concluding if they all could enter, they could so fortify themselves, that such a man was sure. They entered without resistance—so the last state of such a man was, and is, worse than the first. So was the miserable state of the Jews, who resisted doctrines as clear as light itself; and saw miracles, that God only

could effect. Some men suppose that the unclean spirit gathered those seven spirits, by reason the place was hard to take. I think when the evil spirit makes his first attempt, it is not withs word in hand, but temptations, flattery, lies and deceit; if he is resisted with prayer, he flies. The conclusion is, if we give no place to the devil, God will never give him power to take us by storm. The similitude of such an apostate exactly fitted the ambitious Jewish nation; those wicked spirits keep the Jews still in hatred and unbelief. Note, sweeping is outside work; not like washing.

CHAPTER XIII.

There are several remarkable subjects to be observed in this chapter. First. The sower and the seed. The good seed is the pure word of God, the sowers were Christ himself, and those whom he sent. The seed was kept pure during the life of the apostles, and some time after: but the pure word has been wofully corrupted since; yet not so corrupted but it yet makes converts. The different kinds of earth have an allusion to the different state of mens' minds. The enemy sent out false teachers, who sowed corrupt seed, and produced false professors, who opposed the truth. The disciples asked if they might have liberty and power to root them up, as the enemies who despised Moses' law were put to death; but the Saviour would not allow it. Let all grow together in the field, or the world, until judgment; the angels will gather them for the fire. The Lord said to his disciples, to you it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, and the meaning of parables, but not to others. Why so? because the former became his scholars, and prayed him to teach them, but others would not. So it is now. Reader, how is it with you? Another parable put he forth, saying, a woman hid a piece of leven in three measures of meal, and it stirred and swelled till the whole was levened. Reader, dost thou know the meaning of this? A little grace put into the heart, if nourished and improved, will sanctify body, soul and spirit: for believers, by faith in the promises, by divine influx partake of the divine nature. And that can increase. Another corresponding doctrine, we will observe; the treasure hid in the field, the wise seeking merchant bought the field, but it

cost him all he had. The merchandise of divine wisdom is better than the merchandise of gold. Reader, if ever you gain heavenly wisdom, it will cost you all you have, little or much. I expect you understand it.

Now learn the parable of a learned scribe; he is a man versed in the old levitical law; and being translated into the new kingdom, being acquainted with the mysteries of both Testaments, he can draw precious things out of the Old and the New, whereby he is able to feed, edify, and build up the church of Christ. Paul was one such, and almost none such. The parable of the net cast into the sea, gathering in and drawing out many fishes, both good and bad, some preserved, the rest were cast away. This is like great revivals, many profess, and become *members* of churches, yet the great deep of the heart being never broken up, they become nominal christians, dwelling in some church where they carry religion in one hand, riches and honour in the other; who at the end of the world will be cast away! Reader, have you seriously considered these sayings? Notice the last verse, how that none are saved irresistibly, though the Lord himself should be the minister!

Unbelief is not the only damning sin, as some men assert; sinners are condemned or damned by the law; and unbelief prevents the saving effects of the gospel.

CHAPTERS XIV, XV.

Peter, venturing to walk on the water to Jesus, feared when the seas raved. Here observe, there is no safe walking but by faith, and as faith fails we sink; so it will be with every poor soul who leaves the body without saving faith, he will sink like a stone to its center. Note xv. 13, people in churches are planted, as Paul calls it; but many are added to churches that the Lord added not, and all who are not planted by the spirit of truth will be rooted up!

In the fifteenth chapter, notice how prevailing persevering faith and prayer is. The woman of Canaan followed Jesus; would take no denial, and if counted as mean as a dog, would not in the least resent it, but prayed the Lord to give her the dog's portion, even the crumbs that may fall from the children's table. The answer was reviving, viz.

O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt! Reader, follow the example, it is worthy of imitation.

CHAPTER XVI, XVII.

I SHALL illustrate on four cardinal points. First. The nature and danger of false doctrine, compared by the Judge, to be of the nature of leven, which may spread through the whole church in succession. People in our day think too favourable of false doctrine, even such as they themselves believe to be false; and ministers are counted rigid and uncharitable who warn people to beware of error—or leven.

Secondly. View the believer's sure foundation, that on which the primitive church stood, which is Jesus Christ, as Lord and God, revealed to the soul which is translated into the gospel kingdom. This foundation stands sure. Those who continue in this most holy faith, will abide for ever. If Jesus be our sure foundation against the powers of earth and hell, then Jesus must be the "mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." *Amen.*

Thirdly. How about the keys? A key is an instrument to open locks, whereby we gain admission into the cabinet of hidden treasure: signifying spiritual knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel and the kingdom. Our Lord said, when the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. John xvi. 13. This is the key of knowledge (Luke xi. 52) that the lawyers took away from the people by false interpretations; they entered not into the true light themselves, and hindered others. Therefore, what the apostles wrote on earth, the same is recorded in Heaven. Nothing must be added to, or diminished therefrom; then it must be intended by infinite wisdom to be the only and unalterable rule for the faith and good economy of the christian church for ever. *Amen.*

In this chapter we find the strongest evidence of the divinity of our Lord God, by the testimony of three respectable witnesses, viz. Peter, James and John, who were chosen apostles. O ye Arians, that brightness which appeared, was the same eternal Jesus, the Word or Logos, before he assumed a human body; the same that said, Lo, I come, and a body hast those prepared ME! Thou i. e. the whole of the divine council of God, and the Holy Ghost was God in operation. Jesus is, was, and is to come

the Esse; by reason, he that hath the Son hath life; and his words are, "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life." This shekina or emanation, is divine life, and divine light, which constitutes the Esse and Essence, and is truly the most high and mighty Lord God!!! Jesus dwells in that increated light, not accessible! The witnesses knew Moses and Elias; perhaps Moses died fifteen hundred years before our evidences were born; Elias was not known to them before. Reader, if thou art on thy way to Heaven, believe to thy comfort, thou wilt be no stranger there.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CERTAIN man asked our Lord who was the greatest in his kingdom; the way he answered was by calling a little child and placing him in the midst, and informing the people that unless they experienced converting grace and became translated into the kingdom, to which that child belonged, they could not be saved! If children belong to the kingdom, who can with propriety forbid their being baptised with water? Children do never come under condemnation until they are capable of chosing, and then do wrong presumptuously. Adam's guilt cannot cleave to the souls of his offspring, and his own soul be exonerated. When his soul sinned, the soul of all souls sinned; and this is recorded to be the sin of the world. And so it was; and when Adam repented, we all repented: by reason his whole soul repented: so, also, and when his soul believed, did ours; all souls believed. So John the baptist exclaimed, saying, behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world! In this chapter we find a rule of discipline delivered by the Lord himself, viz. If thy brother trespass against thee, &c. finally, if the two first rules fail, tell the church, or that sister church, where thee and thy brother are in particular membership. Remember, it is the church, or that church collectively; and if the church shall judge him guilty, and he will not take conviction, let him be expelled. Then follows the doctrine of forgiveness; whenever thy brother repents, forgive him from your heart. Then follows a parable, the pure interpretation thereof lies deep. The debtor perhaps was debtor to his landlord; the debt is heavy, the law was rigorous; for

if the debtor had no money, he, his wife, his children, and all he had must be sold. The debtor owned the account to be just; and he humbled himself and prayed, and it moved the lord to pity him; therefore he loosed him, and forgave him the whole debt. But for his unmerciful conduct toward his poor debtor, his lord called him to his bar, the second time, ordered him to be put into prison, and charged him with the old and new account! From this parable we learn that a believer's first justification is not irrevocable; but its continuation appears conditional. Men are lost for unmerciful conduct, as well as acts of injustice. The same measure we meet, shall be measured to us again.

CHAPTER XIX.

There appears to be nothing here very hard to understand, so as to need the interpreter. There is a mystery in that of a man and wife being *one* flesh; this is a mystical oneness: but in their children they are in fact one flesh. Why then are people so hard to believe that Jesus Christ possessed two natures in one person? Let him that readeth understand. In verse 18, our Lord enjoins obedience to the sacred decalogue, written by the finger of God, and handed to the people by his servant Moses. Some hold to the Jewish Sabbath on the authority of the holy decalogue; but the christians hold the Lord's day for their Sabbath, being the first day of the week, in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection, and the great work of redemption; knowing that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Our Lord receives sinners, by faith and repentance; but he receives little children without such preparation. And as he receives such, should not his ministers receive and baptise them in his name, to whom they belong? We farther learn here, that no sinner can ever inherit a place in heaven unless he will sacrifice every earthly kind of pleasure, honour, ease and earthly treasure, i. e. comparatively.

Notice our Lord's answer to the man who addressed him with the honourable title of "Good Master." The answer was, why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. It is a very general and correct impression, that God is one, for two superlatives cannot exist.—God is over all, blessed for ever. He is the Lord thy God, worship thou him! The Deity can be but one, i. e. *Deus*, one. This most

high God is altogether virtuous; divinely, morally, infinitely, and absolutely good, in the superlative; in and of himself, in his own eternal, immutable, divine and perfect attributes!! No God but one, is undeniable, and consequently none can be originally, in the absolute independent sense, perfectly good, but the one God! Then according to the theology of some men, Christ is considered the Son, in the abstract, and not the most high one God; therefore, according to such an idea, Jesus is no God; and could not be considered as the object of worship and adoration, trust or soul dependance! He could be no more than a good creature and a great prophet; but not good as God is good.

Reader, if you are under the influence of the Arian faith, you may look to it! You contradict the written word, and seem to produce an idea that Jesus was a deceiver! The word recorded by John, says, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. And he himself exclaimed, that the Father and he were one—even the one God incarnate; the one God manifest in the flesh. I, Jesus, who speak, am in the Father, and the Father in me! i, e. Reciprocally. In his state of humiliation, he humbled himself, and personally acted as a servant, for the redemption of sinners. His person was despised, though he was Lord of all: but his God-head honoured. Thus the divinity was in a higher state of exaltation than the person of Jesus. Sometimes he would answer people according to their folly, and their thoughts. The man who called him "Good Master," looked upon him as only man; and he answered him accordingly. But now his humanity is glorified equal with the divinity.

CHAPTERS XX, XXI.

The parable respecting the labourers in the vineyard, is just calculated to teach us, that if the Lord rewards his holy servants, it will be the reward of grace, and not of debt. There appears to be no meritorious exalted seats in heaven; the saints will be equal to the angels, and who would desire more? In the 20th chapter, we have an account of the spirit of episcopacy, making an early attempt. Two ministers desired the Lord to grant unto them supremacy, or the highest seats of power and honour in the Messiah's church, or kingdom. Hear the answer, saying,

"you know not what you ask." Can you be next to me in my kingdom? Can you drink of my cup, and receive my baptism? They answered in the positive. He granted their petition, according to his wisdom, whereby they were answered according to their folly, viz. that they should drink of the cup of his sore affliction, and have the honour of his bloody baptism! but there should be no lordly prelates in the gospel kingdom: and unless there be some private interpretation in our Lord's word, the order of ministers above a presbyter, is from the corruption of the assuming human heart, and is repugnant to the divine orders of Jesus Christ, saying, "it shall not be so among you." It appears the holy inspired apostles left the care and charge of the churches with the elders, with orders for them not to think of acting as lords over the people of God, also charged the people at large to take heed how they heard; but, to prove, and hold fast only what they found to be good. In verse 44, Christ is held under the similitude of a rock; on which some stumbled, and were broken; but on whom that rock falls, it will grind him! Those who stumble at the word through unbelief, they are sufferers thereby—but when the executive vengeance falls on a nation, or on an individual, it is the heavy vengeance of almighty God, falling on the obstinate unbelievers! From such a storm, good Lord deliver us! Dear reader, pause!

CHAPTER XXII.

Here we have an account of a supper, a call, and the need of a wedding garment. The supper is the saving, nourishing, living substance of the precious gospel. The call is the merciful invitation to come to Christ for life.

But it appears, there must be a preparation previous to the participation; and not only an external reform, but a preparation of the heart.

What this wedding garment is, becomes a subject of serious consideration. This dress is given under the similitude of white raiment, Rev. iii. 18; and in Rev. xix. 8, this dress is compared to fine linen, even the righteousness of the saints. A saint signifies one who is sanctified in Christ Jesus. Isaiah (lii. 1. and lxi. 10) calls this garment the garment of salvation, or the beautiful garment, i. e. holiness. The way to state it, is to call it the righteousness of saints.

As saint signifies one sanctified, and those who are sanctified are justified; therefore it appears to be justification by faith, and sanctification through faith in the promises, whereby the soul, by a divine influx, partakes of the divine nature in a measure; and so far they are sanctified, and feel peace with God. Some of the former expositors have introduced the way of righteousness, which if correct, I am utterly in the dark respecting this robe. It is published, that this robe is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that is to say, his active and passive obedience being imputed to the believers. To this doctrine I have four principal objections. First. This robe could not be defiled; see Rev. iii. 4. "Who have not defiled their garments," &c. and our Lord's righteousness cannot be defiled. Secondly. The righteousness of Christ is divine, and cannot be improved; and it is written, that those who are admitted into glory have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. vii. 14. Thirdly. Should I accede to the doctrine of this imputed righteousness, I must be an Arian in principle, believing that Jesus and the Father are not one, but two; and that the great God imputes the righteousness of the Son, as the subordinate being, to the creature man. Whereas the Son saith, the Father and I are one. Fourthly. The divine Saviour thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Phil. ii. 6. Therefore, there must be two Gods of equal dignity, and then there would be no Supreme. If the righteousness of Christ be equal to the Father, he who claims such a righteousness must be as righteous as God, by imputation; which is blasphemy. If one divine attribute were imputed to a creature, it would sink him in a moment. But if he could live under it, he would stand in no need of divine intercession; nor would his conduct make against him, nor for him; nor would the believer be judged according to his, but the Saviour's works. It is written, 'The Lord our righteousness.' Jer. xxiii. But it is written in the original, "Jehova justiria nostra," i. e. "Jehovah our righteousness." For by and from Jesus Jehovah, we receive all the wisdom, grace and righteousness that we possess; yet we need continual intercession. David gives us light on this subject, where he thus speaketh of God, "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart." Psalm xl. 10. I presume that the Baptist church holds the doctrine of Christ's righteousness imputed to believers, and

their sins were imputed to him. They lay a great stress on believer's baptism by immersion, as an indispensible duty, and as a preparative to the Lord's table, after obtaining the divine favour. Let a man examine himself, and so eat. Paul. What, examine himself whether he be in the faith, or if he ever was immersed under water! Judge ye. Water baptism cannot be the wedding garment. This is saying too much about common water. He who is unworthy of a seat at the Lord's table on earth, were he to offer to take a seat in the high church above would soon be ousted. Yet they encourage those whom we refuse to feed, by assuring them that if once justified, that justification is irrevocable. Moreover, if believers have Christ's righteousness imputed to them, so is his baptism. Notice what he said to John the Baptist, as before observed. Towards the close of the 22nd chapter, there stands important points of doctrine, even the grand essentials of the christian religion, viz. the pure theology, that the Lord calls the foremost of all his commands; which is the law of faith, the pure faith, a foundation for the additional improvement of christian virtues; and therefore, it need be a very pure faith: and thus it stands on record, viz. the Lord thy God is one Lord. Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 29. Therefore, the divinity and humanity constitutes one adorable Lord God. God and his Christ are one, like the soul and body of a man. And this one Lord must be loved supremely, with the whole heart, soul and strength. But if you divide the Father and Son, you cannot love both with the whole heart; then your heart must be divided. But when you firmly believe the divinity in the humanity, and the humanity in the divinity, then may you love the Lord thy God with an undivided heart. As to thy fellow-creature, do by him as you would have him to treat you: this doctrine is constitutional. But where is the Holy Ghost called the third person in the trinity? That Holy Spirit is the Lord in operation. These are the three grand essentials of the one Lord God. Jesus calls himself the root and offspring of David. The God of David and the son of David!

CHAPTERS XXIII, XXIV.

These sections contain the prophesies respecting the ruin of poor Jerusalem, after their days of grace were past.

The divine Judge had to announce the sentence which the divine law awards against rebels, gospel slighters, and murderers:—this the blessed Redeemer did with tears. The fall of the Jews, and the end of the world, appear greatly to correspond. The Son coming in awful clouds of wrath—stars, or leading men, falling—lights, as wandering stars, sinking into darkness; these were emblems of the last day. Many impostors did Satan send out in those days, if possible to deceive the very elect. Read Josephus upon that dreadful day. As it was, so it is; he that endures faithful to the end, was, and will be saved. Many who professed the christian name, through fear, like Peter, denied the christian name when life was at stake; which was denying of Christ. Paul caused the saints to blaspheme. Acts xvi. 11. The History of Martyrs says, when one of Christ's disciples were brought out of prison to the stake or gibbet, they were examined for the last time, and the last interrogation was, "art thou a christian?" If he answered in the affirmative, death was his portion. Our Lord observed, that those who denied him before men, them would he deny before angels; for whoever thus sought to save life, should loose it for ever. It was a bold step to be baptised in Christ's name, wherein they put on Christ, or the christian name. Hear Paul's saying, "let us hold fast our profession." Heb. iv. 14. Those faithful souls in the siege of the city who owned Christ as Lord God, denied not his name in the most violent persecutions. At a certain providential opportunity, they made their escape, as the Lord had foretold them to do. When the Romans took possession, Josephus says, that not one christian was found there; all had escaped in a hasty flight to the mountains, &c. This was called the coming of the Son of Man. This was the coming of Christ that the apostle John lived to observe.

CHAPTER XXV.

Here we have the parable of the church of God compared to a company of virgins, pure from idolatry: some acted wisely, but others did not. This corresponds with the preceding chapter. Those virgins, or saints, were and are espoused to Christ, waiting for the full consummation. They took their lamps and moved on, and waited for the call. Those

who acted wisely, took oil with them beside what was burning, least the burning oil should be exhausted. This is going often to the throne, to beg grace to help in time of need; laying up in store; giving diligence to make their election sure. Not acting as fools, but as wise; redeeming time, in perilous days. But the foolish depended on their first stock to be sufficient; once in grace, always in grace. The perseverance of the saints, as some say, is sure. The wise slumbered, but some slept. I observe, the wise and prudent had no righteousness to spare. Read Rom. xi. The old kingdom fell, and the Gentiles were grafted, in the new union, into the old Abrahamic covenant: and Paul warns the Gentile converts not to be high minded, but fear. Some authors say, the foolish virgins had lamps, but they never were lit; if so, we can prove they never went out. David gives some scripture light on the spiritual sense and use of a lamp, viz. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm cxix. 105. But David's wise son, Solomon, gives us a full explanation of the similitude, saying, "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light." Prov. vi. 23. The true interpretation is this: the command of God points out to the church every part of her duty toward God and man, in her economy, discipline and government; as the Lord ordered his apostles, after planting churches, to teach them all things whatsoever he had commanded them. Last chap. The spirit in the word is the light. The law of the spirit of life in Christ, frees the believer from the law of sin, and the just sentence of the law of death. Rom. viii. The letter and spirit comprehends it. To have the form of religion only, is to be ignorant of the law and gospel. The entrance of the word giveth light. David. The word of the gospel is spirit and life, saith the Lord. To walk in the true light by faith, is to walk with God. The spirit giveth life: the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord. Prov. xx. 27. When the spirit of man is illuminated with the spirit of the word, it discovers to him the secret wickedness of his heart; and when the soul is translated, the glorious light of the gospel shines unto him, giving rest. The pure church lives in the spirit, walks in the gospel commands, and hath nothing to do with bishops' laws, as having no light nor life in them. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the alarm

cometh! Whoever is kind to one of his people, the Lord takes it as done to himself. A cup of cold water given to one of his people in distress, shall be rewarded here or hereafter.

Reader, have you considered all these things? and, above all, remember those who enter heaven are a prepared people for that place, holy, pure in heart, and heavenly minded.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Note here, the Jewish passover was in full authority during the Redeemer's public ministry, substantiated by the best authority. Then how say some of you, that John the baptist lived under the gospel dispensation? A capital mistake! The Lord's supper supeseded the passover, as baptism superseded circumcision: for Jesus came by blood and water. It appears here, that the Lord's supper was received while sitting at the table. The 28th verse fully substantiates the glorious doctrine of ATONEMENT. Let Mr. Stone write on, and deny our Lord's penal sufferings, with his Greek phrase *at-one*, instead of *atone;* and what hath he gained by that, only that God and man are at one—or reconciled through the blood of his cross. Thus saith the Lord, This is my blood of the New Testament, shed for the remission of sins. What is sin but the transgression of the law? and what could remove that guilt but Christ's atoning blood? Thus it is, that blood and water are the two significant seals; for this signifies the fountain opened in the house of David, for sin and uncleanness. Zech. xiii. 1. These figures are and were necessary, but not to be considered as substances. As the Jews boasted in circumcision, and despised others; so the baptists glory in baptism by immersion, and reject all others. The Hebrews and Egyptians could converse together, labour together; yet an Egyptian thought it an abomination to eat with a Hebrew.

The gospel wrote by Matthew, ends with the sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. The glorious Emanuel, the Lord from heaven, the quickening Spirit, assumed human nature, in order to suffer for lost sinners. The whole of his travels in this unfriendly world, shows that he was a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief. When the cloud drew

near, he was in the place called the garden; seeing our fall was in the garden; here the eternal Word being made flesh, entered the miserable conflict against all the powers of death and hell, men and devils, in a violent confluence, or united conflux; besides the bitter cup of unmixed wrath presented to his choice. Here his love was tried to the uttermost. God's dear humanity, i. e. the Lord's Christ, must drink this cup, or the earth must be smitten with a curse. The day of vengeance was come; the awakened sword was drawn. See Psalm lxxv. 8. Zechariah xiii. 7. "Awake, sword." Isai. li. 17. The cup of trembling appeared; he entered into an agony, excessive, exquisite, unnamed distress, so that it forced great drops of blood and sweat through the sacred pores of his body. Reader, must it not be a desperate heart that can feel no warm meltings of love and gratitude to the Redeemer? O, that doleful night, and until nine in the morning, he bore the insults, and corporal punishment inflicted by cruel men, under infernal influence! And the third hour, which was nine in the morning, he was stretched and nailed to the cross, between heaven and earth, as though unfit for either! suffering, the just one for the unjust human family. The Holy One became a sin-offering to redeem a lost world! Jehovah had no need of such a bleeding, suffering victim to appease his wrath, but to reconcile his just law; nor did his holy law need it, for it was well able to execute vengeance on daring rebels, and be glorious in his proceedings: but then no soul could have been saved; and here divine love and mercy interposed. Judgment and justice are the foundation of Jehovah's throne; but on account of this great sacrifice, mercy and truth goes before, and proposes conditions of peace to rebels; yea, loudly exclaims, and intreats sinners to submit. God, in his divine order and government, could never countenance rebels, without contradicting himself; which thing is impossible. He will never pardon rebels without discovering his abhorrence to the audacious and filthy works of the flesh and devil. His glorious dignity will not admit of the display of his love and mercy without asserting the prerogatives of his divine holiness. God delights in his own divine perfections, and therefore must delight in order; for out of order he cannot act. Thus the divine humanity must bleed, suffer and die, or no soul could ever be pardoned. He hung on the tree in exquisite

torture until the sixth hour, even noon-day. The Jews, the Romans, the devil, death and hell exerting their forces, trying to cause him to faint before the work was finished. Besides all this, the Redeemer must drink in divine law-wrath, for he bore our sins, or the miseries due to them, in his own body on the tree. Behold and see, was ever pain like his. He cried, "I thirst." No friend to give him drink; but an enemy gave him a mixture of vinegar and gall. A total eclipse took place; the earth trembled to her centre; rocks split into innumerable pieces; graves bursted, and many saints arose: and as it is appointed for man *once* to die, I expect they died no more. Reader, for a moment think, what must a sinner feel who dies without an interest in Christ! About the ninth hour, or three o'clock, Jesus cried, bowed his blessed bloody head, saying, IT IS FINISHED! and gave up the ghost. The eternal principle of divine life, which was the soul of Jesus, withdrew for a season; yet the body was God's holy body, which could not see corruption. The Jewish rites were nailed to the cross, then buried for ever. The third day he arose; after laying in the tomb thirty-six hours, he took up his eternal life again, and dieth no more. This resurrection effects the believer's justification. Men and devils strove hard to prevent his resurrection, and to prevent its being believed. He tarried with his disciples and ministers forty days, teaching them how to proceed, and speaking comfortable words to them; telling the apostles, that after the New Kingdom came down, and they were inspired, to go out among the Gentiles, gather disciples from all nations, plant them in churches, baptising them with a new ceremony, never heard of before, viz. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then his orders were, to teach the churches to observe all things whatsoever he should command by the Spirit to them; whatever he whispered in the ear, to proclaim it on the house top. He blessed them, and ascended to glory; then in ten days sent down the promised kingdom, and the down-pouring of his Spirit: but you will have more of this in its right place. Friendly reader, I have followed Matthew, and you have traced me; what think ye? I wish you to observe two points more, and so its ends. First, If ministers will teach the churches his commands only, he will attend the ministry to the end of the world. Does this prove the Redeemer to be God as well as man?

May the Lord pardon my mistakes, and prepare me for what may follow. Amen.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS

ON THE WRITINGS OF THE EVANGELIST

MARK.

WE have passed through the sacred writings of the holy apostle Matthew; and Mark bears witness to the very same in substance. The apostles were not always eye witnesses together of the same things that happened; but all spake by the same spirit. Reader, cast thine eye upon the ninth chapter and 37th verse, and own that christian people's little children should have a visible seal of a gracious covenant by baptism, as well as the children of the Jews by circumcision. That they should be received in some manner, who will deny? The way I proceed, in the fear of God, is, when the parent with a babe requests the gospel baptism to be administered on their little child, after an admonition, I receive the child, and baptise it with water. This puts the name Christian on; and as every child born in christendom is born a nominal christian, why not seal them? Children whose given names are not confirmed in baptism are not bound to keep that name. To receive little children, is receiving Christ; and what shall we say to those who reject and forbid them? They are his.

LUKE.

LUKE published his declaration, and assures the reader, that they all believed the same things: he rehearses the history of John the baptist; the nativity of Christ, which the civil world calls Christmas, or birth of the Redeemer—a time which a majority keep in abominable idolatries! Shame—shame—shame!

In the 3d chapter and 16th verse, John observes, that he was not worthy to stoop down and loose the Saviour's shoes. If we are rightly informed, this was performed to a high-priest before he stepped into the water to be baptised, or consecrated. But here I must beg my reader's attention while I return back to the 2d chapter and 46th verse, where it is written, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Here it was, that one of the elders of the christian church, whose name was Arius, of Alexandria, in the fourth century, took shelter against the rebukes of the christian church that he had left; he exclaimed that Jesus Christ, though a great being, was inferior to the Father, seeing he could *wax stronger*, and grow *wiser*. He soon gained proselytes; and after converting the emperor and civil power, like Mahomet he undertook violence. This raised a bloody persecution against the church. He grievously vexed the primitives. Some were banished, and their property confiscated; some were tortured; and others put to death. This doctrine was of the devil then, whatever it may be now! Dr. Priestley exclaims, that Jesus was fallible: if so, he was no God. The Arian heresy reduced the christian cause and name to disgrace; for they were divided in other points of doctrine, in many particulars; but, by denying Christ to be God, they kept up some kind of union for a time. The great council of Nice checked Arius, and established another new theology, to wit, Three *distinct* persons in the undivided Godhead! Yet as they say, the Father is God, Jesus is God, the Spirit is God—yet those persons are not three Gods—but *one* only! We hold no hard disputes with those who confess Jesus to be very God. Jesus, as man, was of the line of David, which was an elect royal line, made or formed of a virgin. As this precious body was produced by the great eternal Spirit, his soul, as from the Sire, must be a divine soul, which is the divinity itself. Thus the two natures being united in one person reciprocally, the two natures did act in vicissitude, alternate, mutually; therefore Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, possessed of human feelings; which produces an idea in men that our Lord had a human soul. But could it be proven that his soul was truly a mere human soul, it would prove he was a mere man, yea, it would overturn the faith of the chris-

tian church. As the *humanity* advanced to the full stature of man, even so did the *divinity* increase in the Lord until he received the eternal Spirit in full, without measure, which is infinite. For thus it is written, "God is glorified in him; God shall glorify him in himself." "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." Here the reciprocal union between the two natures is fully substantiated; as the body and soul of a human creature constitutes the man external and internal. The soul of Christ was his life, and that life was eternal life, which assuredly is the divine Esse, or existence of Jehovah. That was the life which he laid down, and hath taken up again, and liveth for evermore. Amen.

The divine child growing in favour with God and man, may be illustrated as follows: With respect to man, previous to his public ministry, he was much admired for his beauty, his virtue, humility, and wisdom, a display of which, in the twelfth year of his humanity, astonished the great doctors of Jerusalem. Thus the Deity favoured the humanity, until the perfect humanity received the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and thus, being perfect God and perfect man, he became a full and complete Saviour. He was the great Emanuel. Not a demi-god; but the all-wise God, our Saviour. He was the divine Emanation, proceeding from the divine Centre of eternal perfection; but being incarnate, God in the flesh, possessing both natures, he was prepared to feel trouble, sorrow and distress.

What is written may suffice, out of the abundance that may be advanced, that Jesus Christ is both Lord and God in one exalted person; who at length will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; to him be honour, and power everlasting. Amen. 1 Tim. vi. 15. 16.

Friendly reader, let me intreat thee to weigh this subject with all your sense, and pray daily to the Great One to illuminate your understanding, that you may believe in Christ as Lord God, and have power to trust in him as your all-sufficient, loving Saviour. I testify against all those who view Jesus less than God; therefore, if any man refuse to give him equal honour with the Father, he will lightly esteem that man, if not utterly reject him. Here is a stumbling-block to Arians; that they should ho-

nour the Son, even as they honour the Father: which they refuse to do.

God did the Testament enjoin,
And then he seal'd it with his blood;
The man who did his life resign,
Was perfect man, and perfect God.

But man, vain man, must thus conclude,
That all is false beyond his skill;
How low his thoughts, how rash and rude,
To contradict the Master's will.

If Jesus be divided from the Father, so are all believers in Christ. The only way that fallen man could ever be in union with God, was effected by the divinity and humanity becoming one. If Christ be not God, then being grafted into Christ availeth nothing. Facts are stubborn things. If God and Christ be not the same, how can believers who are grafted in the Vine, partake of the root and fatness? Read D. Jarret's first volume.

From Luke vi. to the end, I discover no great difficulty in understanding his writings; he bears witness to those who wrote before. I advise my reader to pay close attention to the 19th chapter and 27th verse. Christ being King as well as Redeemer, all men are bound to obey him, in order, as subjects of his visible kingdom. He hath established his church, or kingdom, in this civilized world; all those who, from corrupt principle, refuse to live under his written government, are deemed his enemies, and at the last day will be treated as such; saying, "Bring those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before me." O, reader, be reconciled to the Lord. See chap. xxii, xxiv, xxv. There note, that episcopacy is expressly forbidden; therefore, why will men contend with God.

JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

THE gospel by John comes next of course. This holy apostle strikes at the deepest mystery in the sacred book, saying, in the beginning (of time) was the Word, and the Word was with God, eternally, and the Word was God. Furthermore, all things were made by him and for him. In him (the Word) was divine life and divine light, which are the *esse* and *essence* of Deity. Read on, all who received him then, as their Lord God, he gave them power to become the sons of God. What manner of man is this, that can give condemned sinner's, children of wrath and hell, power to be adpoted sons of God? Reader, he holds that power still on earth; and if you will receive him as your teacher, Saviour, Lord and Master, he will give you that power. Christ's humanity and his divinity was the glorious Emanuel, or God with us. The wisdom of this world, with all its philosophical notions, have found themselves lost in a crowd of difficulties, from thence have drawn false conclusions, and cannot comprehend truth. Reader, O! reader, if your mind still wavers, I would advise you just now implicitly to believe the word, and pry no farther into the divine mystery without a light, lest your intellects should be impaired, and you may wade out of your depth. Think no less of Christ than himself hath declared, that the Father and Son were ONE. What God hath joined together, let no man put assunder.

You may read on now and understand, until you enter the 3d chapter, where it insists on the new-birth. Not only gross sinners need the new birth, but many a blind teacher, as Nicodemus was. When children arrive to the knowledge of moral good and evil, by a divine light, they are tempted by fleshly lusts, inticed and drawn, until the soul is prevailed on, and yields, and the soul is condemned; then the seed is sown and soon takes deep root in the heart, from whence issues out all wickedness that is committed on earth by men. Therefore, all the outward forms and reformations in the world, can never change that evil, wicked and deceitful heart, and root out the evil seed; but this heaven-

ly birth can effect it. So let sinners try to understand the mystery in a speculative point of view, and strive, hope and pray until they understand it by a happy experience. Notice the 13th verse, how our divine Saviour was in heaven and on earth, at the same time! he is now personally in heaven, and yet upon earth, moving amidst the churches. Yea, he was, and is always in the world; for lo, he filleth immensity, and every point of duration. He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever! *Amen.*

CHAPTER V.

THERE appears no great difficulty in understanding this chapter, in its literal sense. Sinners are considered spiritually dead in sin, being dead by the law, and strangers to quickening grace.

Reader, thou art solicited to look well into the 25th verse. Here stands divine orders, that you, as a professor of the christian religion, must honour Jesus, equal with the Father. Thus you must suppose two Gods of equal glory, and have no supreme; else acknowledge the divinity and humanity to constitute one incarnate "Lord God!" *Amen.*

CHAPTER VI.

IN this blessed section there is a gracious, glorious, and interesting mystery, that needs an experienced and a gifted interpreter; that is respecting the body and blood of the Lord Jesus to be the spiritual meat, drink, and life of the soul. Moreover, that this bread came down from heaven! He saith in the positive, yea, in the strongest terms, "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." A question arises, viz. how could his flesh come down from heaven, when made of a virgin here on earth? First, This was decreed in the eternal mind, as "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8. The divine Word in its divine essence was eternal with God, and was God, and is God; for the Father, the Word, and Spirit, are three grand essentials of the one adorable Lord God, who holds the records in safety. Thus it came to pass, that this divine Word descended in emanation from the center of the eternal mind, or bosom of Deity, or Divino; but not considered in the abstract, no more than the beams of the

sun are abstracted from the body. The Word was made flesh; this is incarnation; the flesh begotten by and became of the very same nature: thus the union is reciprocal. Just like the seamless coat, there is no division. And thus it appears the soul ingrafted into Christ by faith, partakes of the root and fatness; feeding by faith on the virtue of Christ's blessed body and blood! Thus it appears that the humanity of Christ, is and was a divine humanity; when a soul feeds on the Word, he feeds on Christ.

CHAPTERS VII, VIII.

Let us carefully look into these sacred sections, and look up to the Fountain of light for a right understanding. Notice the 24th verse, and know that people make capital mistakes respecting religion, truth and error, by judging according to the appearance of things; but our Lord teaches us to judge righteous judgment, by the law and testimony.

In the seventh section we are told that the Holy Spirit was not then given in the fulness of the new dispensation, by reason that humanity was not then glorified. How say some of you that John's baptism was the christian baptism, when Christ had not ascended, and the great spirit was not given.

My reader may see clearly in the eighth chapter, that he who lives in the practice of sin, is not only a servant of sin, but a child of the devil! Nevertheless, if a sinner believes that Jesus is the only and true Saviour, and consequently will abide in his word as a learner or disciple, the Lord will surely have mercy on him; by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus will free him from the law of sin and death, by the saving knowledge of the truth. Then why will you die a sinner?

CHAPTER IX.

This section abounds with notable miracles, and among the rest, Jesus displayed his almighty creating power in giving sight to one who was born blind! This one blind man became a disciple and worshipper of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER X.

First. Jesus compares his faithful followers to a flock of sheep; himself their good shepherd. He calls, they follow; he leads, but never drives. He feeds, guards and protects all those who obey his voice, and follow his holy footsteps. Such he will feed, who are called, chosen and faithful. Whoever desires to be one of his sheep and feed in his pastures, must come in by the one door. "I am the door of the sheep," saith the Lord; if any one enters in by this door, he will find pasture in every apartment of duty. How say some, that baptism by immersion is the door into fellowship, and church communion? It is not so. It is spiritual baptism that unites believers. Water baptism is but an outward sign, or figure of the uniting baptism. Simon was baptised, but remained in the gall of bitterness!

In verse 16 our Lord spake of other sheep he had, who were not of the Jews; them he should bring in and make one fold. This may allude to what is called the vocation of the Gentiles. There were several among the Gentiles who, like Cornelius, feared God and wrought righteousness; who when the gospel was sent among them gladly came in. After the Jews rejected the gospel, the apostle turned to the Gentiles, and as many as were thus prepared, appointed, or ordained, quickly believed, and embraced the gospel. They also were baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; this baptism made them nominal christians. If Christ's flock will obey his voice, and follow him, he will protect, defend, feed and save them for ever. Reader, mind the terms, obey his voice and follow him, and he will give unto thee eternal life. Jesus said, verse 27, 28, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter we have the history of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; they were godly poor people, living in a little village, where the humble Redeemer often resorted, and partook of their plain home fare. Jesus loved Mary, who once washed his feet with her tears: he also loved Martha, and her brother. Notice a few observations in this chapter.

First. How the blessed Lord loves his true disciples, let them be ever so poor, and visits such now in spirit. Again, notice how he was possessed of sympathy, mutually feeling the distress of the human creature; for as he saw Mary weeping, and the friendly Jews also weeping, Jesus groaned; yea, Jesus wept! Although the great Redeemer is now in his glory, and cannot feel trouble, he can feel pity and divine compassion. Let this excite us to love him, and trust in his goodness and power.

Hear with attention the Redeemer's proclamation, saying, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead (in sin) yet shall he live (be quickened); and he that liveth a life of holy faith shall never die. Reader, believest thou this? Notice the contents of the proclamation, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life." The interpretation is this: I am the eternal life, that is the esse, or existence of Deity; that is my life and my divine soul: for I am God, and there is none else, as being one with the Father—not two, but one; and I am the almighty power which raiseth the dead. The general resurrection at the last day, is a solemn and awful certainty. The rest of this chapter seems easy to understand.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE are a few particulars in this sacred chapter that calls our attention. Our dear Redeemer rode into the great city on a colt, to fulfil the saying of one of his prophets, calling on the daughters of Zion to behold their King coming, meek and lowly, riding upon an ass. O, what amazing condescension, a lesson to humble the pride of his creatures! His despised followers, in their simple manner, gave every mark of honour to their divine Prince, making use of the natural beauty of the boughs of trees, with the loud acclamations of Hosanna; which word abounds with the designation of the highest encomiums. The children joined the loud Hosannas, according to what was long foretold, that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings (comparatively) the great Redeemer should receive perfect praise. The impulses of his spirit raised such united shouts, that the city echoed and vibrated in return to their exalted strains, until the hypocritical men of order, who were not able to quell the triumph, called upon the Lord Jesus to

rebuke his disciples, and teach them order. The Lord said unto them, as the divine impulses by which they were influenced were such, that if they were irresistibly silenced, it would so frustrate the grand design, that it might cause the very stones in the street and in the walls to cry out; that such a phenomena might appear, as would terminate in the destruction of the city.

Reader, you need the interpretation of the 25th verse. Thus saith the Lord, he that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. These sayings respecting love and hatred in diverse places, are not to be understood according to the general idea we take up relative to love and hatred; but it is to be considered comparatively, like that of a man hating his father, mother, wife and children, and God hating Esau, an innocent babe; but God prefers one before the other for certain purposes, according to foreknowledge: and we must love the Lord above all in heaven and earth. Let him that readeth try to understand. Thus saith the Lord, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.

There were several of the ruling men in Jerusalem who believed on the blessed Redemer, but through fear of the people they would not confess him, nor be baptised in his name. Such believers will have their lot with infidels. Sinners may stop their ears, and shut their eyes, until they appear spiritually dead, deaf and blind. It is a dangerous thing to resist the light. Those who chuse darkness, and die in that channel, may expect to sink into the blackness of darkness for ever!

CHAPTER XIII.

Jesus loved his own, even to the end, that is, to his death. If my reader will inquire, saying, but who are his own? the answer is ready, viz. Those who are not of this world, but are chosen out of the world, and led by his spirit; those who follow the Lamb wherever he goeth.

About this time, one of the apostles, by the name of Judas, gave place to the devil, who entered into him after receiving the sop. Judas had a weak place, which was covetousness; Satan entered there. If Judas did feel malice in his heart, as well as light in his head, I must suppose his sin was unpardonable; but if he was influenced by the love of money;

the sin was not unpardonable. By way of strong supposition, we may take up the following idea, which is my impression: he had seen the myracles wrought by his Lord, that his wisdom and power were superior to all the world; and believed that himself would get the money, and the Lord would make his escape. This appears like a correct impression from the writings of Matthew, xxvii. 3. When Judas saw that his Lord was condemned, he repented.

In the 35th verse, we have the sure mark of our Lord's true disciples, that is, love to each other. This is most convincing to men of the world. O, how destructive are divisions to precious souls, and how it weakens our spiritual armies and cools our brotherly love. This seems to be the general lamentation among all spiritual christians; but who can show the original cause? and how the evil may be removed? Perhaps we read of near, if not quite, two hundred separate and distinct bodies of people professing the christian religion, all exclaiming, lo, here is Christ! If one minister attempts to show what he judges to be errors in such a church, even should his judgment be correct, he is counted an enemy to that people for telling it. Here we are chained and fettered by each other. People in general seem to dislike that any preacher, however moderate, should speak in any way against what they consider corrupt doctrine or discipline. Just like a law that once existed in pagan Rome, that no one should speak against the idols of another. All cry out, peace, peace; where there is no peace. Paul was accounted an enemy for opposing the false doctrine in Gallacia: but he observed. that they should do nothing against, but for the truth. If the good Spirit should whisper in the ear, must it not be proclaimed on the house top? Let the people grant that liberty to watchmen.

CHAPTER XIV.

Let us carefully, in the fear of God, look over this section. The first part that calls our attention, are comfortable words from the great Redeemer, concerning the mansions of glory prepared in heaven for all the Lord's friends. The direct way to those bright celestial mansions, is the Lord Jesus: by trusting in him at all times; by obeying the word, and walking in his footsteps; this is the direct way to heaven.

Philip besought the Lord to show them the Father, and that would satisfy them. Pay attention to the answer. "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" Philip thought he knew Jesus, and believed him to be the Son of the Father; but it was the Father Philip desired to see. Thus saith the Lord, in plain words, He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; for I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.

Notice the 17th verse. The spirit of Jesus was always in the world, in light and operation; but under the gospel dispensation the spirit is in the saint. The spirit of Jesus in the soul, shows us plainly of the Father, when his divine love in Christ is shed abroad upon the heart; for God is love in his divine nature; and this is the love of Christ, and the love of God in Christ Jesus.

In the 26th verse, the Comforter issuing from the divinity of Christ, comes in the name of Jesus. Reader, I expect you consider things respecting the Lord God, as the reformed churches do; that is, you confess and adore three distinct persons in the Godhead, and that each person is truly very God; yet they are not to be considered as *three* Gods (although you thus speak), but *one* God. I praise you for honouring the Son, even as you honour the Father; but how would you support your theology against an argumental deist, who might advance the following interrogatives, viz. If you call God the Father a person, the Son being in the Father, he must be included in the first person. Then to hold up the Son distinct as the second person, you must draw him from the first person, and this must mutilate the first glorious person! And holding up the Holy Ghost as the third divine person in the abstract, you rob the Son, who has received the Holy Ghost without measure. And moreover, the most high God is a spirit, and there being but one Holy Ghost, and that is the adorable Father, and the adorable Son possesses the fullness of the Godhead bodily; it appears that the pure light must be found in the following interpretation, viz. The word *trinity* is not found in the scripture, but we read of *three* that bear record, and we need some word to convey our meaning, as we use many proper words not found in holy writ. Then to prevent the inaccurate manner of confounding one thing with another, perhaps the truth lies here, The glorified person, Jesus Christ, is the everlasting Father, and the Prince of

Peace; therefore, the glorious three divine essentials that we call Trinity, reside in the one divine person Jesus Christ. "Great is the mystery," &c.

Our Redeemer bears three significant appellations to the one divine person, viz. Christ, the divine light; Jesus, the divine life; for he that hath the Son, whose name is Jesus, hath life; he is the Lord God, that is divine love; John xv. 9. Continue ye in my love. Thus it appears, that light, life and love count three, but not to be separated. Say Father, Word and Spirit are one God. Rain, hail and snow are one water.

CHAPTER XV.

The contents of this chapter may be illustrated under the similitude of a vine, the invisible root, and the branches, which the root nourishes through the vine.

As touching the parable, note. The invisible root issues forth a tender sprout; it advances to a branch, and progresses to a substantial vine, forming an ample shade. One exclaims, saying, "I sat down under his shadow, with great delight." The interpretation appears to be thus: This root is the eternal Father; the vine that proceeded and came forth from the root, represents Jesus the Son, as produced by him; and the outside covering may represent the visible human substance. Observe, that vine was eternally in God the root, and therefore was God, and should never be considered in the abstract. John viii. 42.

Thus it was, and so it is; the vine was in the root, and the root was and is in the vine; and so it will be for ever. Amen.

Again, when a believer, one who believes with the heart unto righteousness, receives a measure of the Holy Spirit, yea, partakes of the divine nature, his spirit is grafted in the vine, and of course partakes of the root and fatness, and bears the fruit of the Spirit.

For a further illustration of this blessed subject, let it be observed, that those believers who improve what God gives, are changed more into the divine likeness, whereby they are purged and more refined to bear much fruit: but those who, by negligence, are led away by the errors of people who are accounted men of taste and fashion, they fall from their first love; this may be done gradually, almost insen-

sibly, by reason that the spiritual communication seems to cease; although they hold on their form and name to live, yea they pray daily, yet receive no answer by refreshings from divine presence, so they cease to bear the fruit of love, joy and true peace; the divinity removes them from his precious ones, who are led by the spirit. Such may abide in the visible body of christians to the last day, as the foolish virgins did, who, by losing the life of religion, the light must decline with the life; then at the trying hour of death or judgment, their faith will fail, the last spark of hope will perish, and those dry branches be cast into the fire.

Let us hear the conclusion of this mysterious chapter. The way to abide in Christ is to live by faith, in a line of holy obedience, whereby your faith is justified before God and men. Let the divine word dwell richly in you; so will you abide in his love: his joy will remain in you, and your joy will be full. The following axioms call our attention. First. If Christ be divided from the Father, so are all his members. Secondly. The only way that fallen men could ever be in union with their Maker, was effected by divinity and humanity becoming one. Thirdly. If Christ be not God, how do believers in the vine partake of the root and fatness?

CHAPTER XVI.

Here is shown that the Holy Spirit, in that degree as was promised to the gospel age, was not then come, but still promised. The Lord told his little family, that unless he went away, the Holy Spirit would not come; but if I depart, "I will send him unto you." He will reprove the world of sin, &c. The blessed spirit glorified Jesus, by taking of his, and showing the same to the people. Should any one ask, what are his? The answer is, all that the Father hath, are his, verse 15. How are they to be divided into two persons, and each person to be considered very God? The chapter is not very occult or mysterious, for he that runneth may read and understand. The last verse is loaded with consolation for the truly pious. In the world they will meet with tribulations, but in the Redeemer, they will enjoy peace. O, what are earthly troubles when compared to heavenly joys?

CHAPTER XVII.

To know the Father and the Son, is life eternal. Jesus spake with lips of flesh and man-like voice, saying to his own divinity, the Father, I (in person) have glorified thee on earth, in my state of humiliation; have finished the work thou gavest me to do, as is sure to be completed quickly: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. If Jesus existed in, and with the Father before the world was; he existed before time, which was, and is, and will for ever be, eternity. Thus it is written, the Word was with God, (before time) and the Word was God, in essence and esse. Therefore, Jesus cannot be inferior, only as he condescended to act in the capacity of a servant, and became thus in the world poor, that through his poverty we might be made rich! In consequence of which, he was not popular among the great, but by such grace and condescension he merited the highest encomiums, viz. that he should be highly exalted, and his name be above every name; and at that name creation must bow.

Jesus the highest name that's given,
Filled with the Deity;
No other God in earth or heaven,
To him all glory be!

To proceed in the illustration of this divine mystery, the author could produce a number of sacred texts, to show that the Redeemer is called Jehovah in the Old Testament, and Lord in the New Testament. As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name! Isaiah xlvii. 4. It was the spirit of Jesus that spake by the mouth of the prophets, as Peter writes. When Jesus was drawing the business to a close, he appears to make no distinction between his mother Mary and other holy women: he said unto her, while bleeding on the cross, "woman, behold thy son." Then addressed his disciples saying, "behold thy mother." Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister and mother. The morning he arose, he saw Mary Magdalene and said, "touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." There is surely a mysterious sense in this expression. Matthew observes how the holy women

held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Those were suffered to touch his feet. Perhaps the words are to let us understand, that when he ascended to the full glorification of the flesh, he put off all that was of Mary the mother, and put on all that was of God the Father. Thus the human substance became all divine, the same as the immaterial spiritual substance. This is substantiated by the person of Christ being glorified with all the Father's infinite glory. The prayer of the holy Redeemer, loudly calls our attention. He first prays that the apostles might be kept pure, for the grand purpose of establishing his last will, and erecting the christian church. His second request was, for all who should believe on him through their word, verse 20. Let us labour to believe the apostles, as also to obey, and through that intercession, we shall surely be saved.

CHAPTER XVIII.

This chapter reports the sufferings of the just one, in order to save the unjust from the executive wrath of the law. No pen can write, no tongue can speak, nor heart conceive what the Redeemer endured. Let a christian who hath passed from death to life, recollect the misery his soul underwent, and the burden he bore when wrath was revealed from heaven against him, when snares surrounded him, and pains like hell took hold on him; then by faith, view the Lord on the cross, bearing the sins of the whole human family, not only by revelation, but in the execution; then let him realize the human family, which was, is, and is to come to the last generation, and all their sins in thought, word, deed, and what those crimes against the Most High justly deserved; then think of the suffering of the great Redeemer, to make our salvation possible. O candid reader, will you still sin on, grieve his spirit and die? Some of our learned authors attempt to lighten the burden, or load, that I suppose the Lord bore; for they assert that he suffered only for a few elected ones. Believe it who can, I cannot.

In verse 36, our Lord informs us that his kingdom, or church, though in the world, is not of the world; therefore human work, in constituting, or building up his temple, is nothing but the perishable stuff, that the pure fire will consume: yet the word abideth for ever.

Here we read of Peter's fall. Let it be observed that Peter denied his Master entirely through fear, and not enmity. The dread of the Jews, and the power of the Roman empire, sent terror to his soul, which extorted a lie, and an oath to confirm it. But the Jews did not swear in a common way, as the vulgar men swear in christendom, viz. by the great and awful God! Nor did they curse, as our miserable men do, who try to sink each other's soul to hell. Any binding word to yes, or no, was swearing; and any bad wish to themselves or others, was then, and is now, deemed cursing. Moreover, this happened before Peter was inspired: therefore, he obtained pardon; then when converted to the christian faith, knowledge and understanding, he was able to strengthen his brethren.

CHAPTER XIX.

The crown of thorns, intended to mock and punish the Lord, yet it was allusive to his crown of glory; and his mock priest's robe, had its signature in conformity to his priesthood.

In verse 24, the soldiers cast lots for his upper garment, coat or vest; as having no seam, the soldiers agreed not to lacerate it, but cast lots. David foretold this very thing; see Psalm xxii. 18. "For my vesture they cast lots." This seamless coat had a divine significant meaning; even the union subsisting between the divinity and humanity of the Redeemer: this is more than conjunction. The collected wisdom of Jerusalem asserted, the Son of God must be equal to God; and therein they charged our Lord of being guilty of blasphemy! But some have and do acknowledge Jesus the Son of God, yet hold him inferior to his Father. This impression came at first from antichrist, and innocent men may embrace the doctrine, for lack of deeper understanding. In Christ was life, even eternal life, which is the esse, or eternal existence of Jehovah. That life he yielded up on the cross; for he had power to lay it down and take it up again! He is "Jehovah, our righteousness."

CHAPTERS XX, XXI.

Note the 20th and 23d verses. Thus the Lord spake to the apostles, that whosesoever sins ye remit, they are re-

mitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. As the writers of the gospel, wrote as the spirit of Jesus directed, we may judge by the Word as touching our present state of soul; as to our faith, experience and practice.

In verse 28, we read what Thomas expressed respecting his faith in Jesus the Son of the Father, "My Lord, and my God." Christ received the encomium. Attend to a proper examination for a gospel minister to pass through. Lovest thou Jesus more than all your earthly friends? If so, show your love to him by your zealous regard to his church, whether in prosperity or adversity. In the close of the apostle John's gospel, we are told that all is not written that Jesus said and did; but infinite wisdom gave us full enough, and no more; therefore, the gospel contains a complete system for the faith and good economy of the christian church. If so, then, every addition, is human corruption, that is not only defective, but presumptive, and dangerous to society, both civil and religious.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

REMARKS ON CERTAIN TEXTS.

LUKE wrote this narrative, and dedicated it to a certain significant name, viz. Theophilus, which being interpreted, is *A Friend*, a lover of God. He writes as an eye and ear witness of things said and done by his Master, from the first, to his ascension.

In the 6th verse, the apostle publishes their ignorance before Penticost, in hoping that their Lord would restore the kingdom or government to Israel, who were subjected to the Roman pagan empire. Judas is here numbered with the other apostles. Jesus continued with his people after his resurrection, just forty days, according to order; he then led them a distance, blessed them, and ascended upward beyond sight!

Who can conceive what their feelings were at that instant. They returned, and about one hundred and twenty met, and with sweet accord fervently prayed for direction

and protection. Peter gave a lecture on past prophecy, by which he introduced the case of Judas who was guide to them that took Jesus. "He was numbered with us," said Peter, "and obtained part of this ministry." Then relates his dreadful end. See John vi. 70. There the word of the Lord is recorded thus, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you *is* a devil. That *is*, not *was*, in the past tense. Judas fell from the ministry by transgression, verse 25, that he might go to his own place, i. e. hell, where all apostate ministers go, who betray their trust by turning aside for filthy lucre, drunkenness, pride, &c. but especially when one destroys his own life. This was foretold by a prophet; not absolutely decreed, and must be so. Psalm cix. 10.

Among us men it is said, that Judas was a bishop, meaning a superior order over elders; seeing it is written, or translated, bishopric, which alludes to a certain particular province over which he presides. Judas was not thus stationed. Now to find the just root of the word bishop, observe, we may work by a kind of backward etymology, and the root will be found *overseer*, instead of master or lord: the learned say this is the Greek root; let them say. The author is indebted to the wise for his bold assertions, but will submit it. Yet, for fear my judges on this subject should be interested in episcopacy, I will remove my suit to the judgment of Paul, who was a learned and inspired man, and what he wrote is recorded in the courts above. Let Paul be judge, and the author gains his suit. See the records, Acts xx. 28.

Jesus kept time to perfection. He tarried forty days with his apostles and disciples, teaching them (only) how to proceed in preaching, teaching, uniting believers in churches, edifying, and enforcing his authoritative commands on his people. He then blessed them, and went up till their eyes of flesh could see no farther. The tenth day after (the fiftieth from his resurrection) was Pentecost, the feast of weeks, and a great year of liberty among the Hebrews. The apostles were in a room praying, and at the hour of nine o'clock, the hour that Jesus was nailed to the cross, the same hour of the day, he came down in the Spirit, and then were the apostles inspired with the mysteries of the new kingdom, and in a few minutes, if not in an instant, the ministers could speak perhaps ten or twelve languages, and spake in every language to the people that day. The

men mocked at first, but their laughter was soon turned into mourning; for Peter launched into the deep, there let down his net, and caught a multitude. In conformity to order, this exhibition might continue until the sixth hour, which brought noon day: but instead of darkness till the ninth hour, it was a glorious light with the new kingdom. Perhaps it might take up three hours to baptise the three thousand converts, and plant them in the new church, or gospel kingdom, and that would bring on the ninth hour, or three o'clock past meridian.

They were baptised indeed with water; this was gospel baptism, as to the ceremony; that is to say, in the name of of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now if Christ be inferior to God, there must be imperfection in the believer's baptism. That those three thousand people had to give in their experience, one by one, previous to their baptism, then were marched to a certain water, and then dipped, in their clothes or naked, unless it was by a myracle; I am a Thomas in this.

Peter encouraged the Jews to put on Christ, for the promise was unto them and their children first; then to the Gentiles, who were afar off.

In the fifth chapter, we read of a man and his wife, professors, who kept back part of the price they sold their possessions for; both agreed to tell a lie, and both died! Peter said, Satan hath filled thy heart. Let lyars and half hearted christians take the alarm.

CHAPTERS VI, VII.

The first point that calls our attention is respecting the scripture order of deacons. They appear to be temporal stewards in the christian church, that the spiritual stewards might apply their time to reading, prayer, and preaching. The apostle did not even nominate them, only by character. Paul directed the church, even the whole church, to choose out seven: they did so, and the apostles laid their hands on them; not as an inferior class of ministers, for it would not have answered for them to leave the word and serve tables; neither were they called of God to the ministry, but called by the people. Let men blush for thus violating plain truth.

It appears by the words of Stephen, that sinners can har-

den their hearts, resist the spirit, and, like the deaf adder, shut their ears and eyes, stiffen their neck, and refuse the yoke of Christ. Stephen had views of heaven, and Jesus in the vision, at the right hand of glory, devoting his absolute authority to save or destroy. The prayer he made for his murderers showed a measure of the mind of Christ. What an assurance of heaven, saying, Lord, or Jehovah Jesus, receive my soul, or spirit! Reader, here you are taught to believe, that departed souls are no longer in time, but in an eternal heaven or hell. Sin, cleaving to the departed soul, sinks it to hell; but the soul prepared by grace flies to heaven with a convoy. The experience of the martyr Stephen is the privilege of every true believer; not only their privilege, but their safety, and due preparation to be received among the spirits made perfect. If any christian reader, who looks over my revealed impressions, and thinks perfection not essential, or not attainable, let such humbly pray, and God will reveal this to him, as well as to others. The man Stephen was a perfect man, that is to say, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. The soul is a recipient, a vessel, or measure, filled with the fullness of God, when perfect. A wicked soul can fill up the measure of iniquity, until it is a vessel fitted for destruction. So a pious soul can be fitted for happiness. When the eye is single, the body is full of light; and as light increaseth, faith increaseth, and as faith increaseth, love increaseth; and perfect love will cast out fear. Thus the soul is changed from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord. All who hunger and thirst after this grace, and wisely know that the end is not to be obtained without using the means, all such are persevering saints, and never do fall, but obtain, through faith and patience, eternal life.

We read of great faith. Our Lord said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And again, "O ye of little faith." The apostles prayed, saying, "Lord, increase our faith." Paul directs the church, saying, "Him that is weak in faith, receive ye."

In the 8th chapter we read of the bitter soul of a Jew against Jesus Christ and the christians. Chapter ix. 1. the language of the bitter spirit is nervous. Saul breathed out threats against the christians. Breathing is from the lungs, which directly corresponds with the heart, where the wicked spirit entered. This same disposition, more or less, still

rests in an unbelieving Jew against pure christianity. The situation of the Jews, is the fulfilment of prophecy, even what themselves ignorantly and presumptuously predicted, when they exclaimed, saying, "His blood be on us and our children!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Philip went down to Samaria, and his labour was blessed to many. Among the rest, Simon the sorcerer was brought to believe, and received baptism. We hear no talk of his telling an experience of grace; but was found in a short time to be in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity. What remarks shall we make respecting Philip baptizing the eunuch; a subject long occupied with some warmth, that is to say, whether or no the eunuch was immersed? It reads so: the eunuch was sitting in his chariot reading the 53d chapter of Isaiah, about the sufferings of Christ. Philip was taken up in the chariot, and preached Jesus to him: they came to a certain water, on the road, and the gentleman being thus proselyted, said, see here is water, what hinders me from being baptized? Philip told him, if he believed with his heart, he might. The experience he told was, he believed Jesus was the Son of God. They both went down into the water, Philip baptized him.

It appears from the 16th verse, he did not baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the spirit had not fallen on the Gentiles in that quarter, (till after that) but they baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. If Christ was less than God, that baptism would appear not valid. Whether the eunuch changed clothes, or was baptized naked, we know not. Philip, perhaps, had not a second dress, but take it as it reads; if one went under water, so did the other. I expect they stood in the brink of the water, and the element was applied.

CHAPTER IX.

In passing through this section we read how the merciful Jesus stopped the violent persecutor Saul. The glorious brightness from his divinity blinded the eyes of Saul, in mercy to his desciples, which terminated also in the salvation of Paul. His call to the ministry, was not a money

call; but that he would certainly suffer from Jews and infidels. Saul conferred not with flesh and blood, but in humble submission, asked, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, &c. Ananias was sent.—Saul was praying, blind, three days and nights, fasting. Paul's baptism should be closely observed. He received sight forthwith, arose and was baptized; he was then no longer the persecuting Saul the Jew, but Paul the christian. These words "forthwith" he arose and was baptized. My impression is, it was done upon the spot, in the house, after which he took some food, and was strengthened.

CHAPTERS X, XI, XIII, XIV.

Here we have the sacred history of Peter, Cornelius, &c. Previous to this, Peter was a national predestinarian; but God showed him by the vision that he was no respecter of persons. Being now fully persuaded that salvation was free for all, he went with the messenger. Cornelius met him, fell at his feet! Peter took him up, saying, stand up, I myself am a man. No mere man must be worshipped, and if Christ Jesus is only man, distinct from the Father, it is idolatry to worship him. But he is Lord God.

Reader, be candid: Jesus must be creator or creature, God, or man, or angel, or God and man in one divine person: now draw your conclusions. God can create a chain of beings in links of gradation, one above another; but, God did not create the Lord Jesus, but begat him, and never another. Could Deity beget a Son inferior to himself? Impossible. But the Lord Jesus thought it no robbery to declare himself equal with the Father, even in the days of his humiliation. Therefore all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

The gracious visit Peter made to the house of Cornelius, where he preached the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. The report alarmed the church in Jerusalem, fearing their dear apostle had gone beyond inspiration; and consequently, Peter was called upon to give the church satisfaction, who humbly submitted to his trial. We may call it a session, before which Peter was tried; for the true church is the court of the Lord's house. This corresponds with the words of our Lord recorded by Matthew, chapter xviii.—This shows the beauty, order and simplicity of the golden

days. The two grand points of the constitution of the primitive church are the same as in heaven above, viz. Justice and judgment. There were no high courts and low courts, composed of bishops and presbyters, to try souls in scripture times; for the ministers, even apostles, were members of the church in those days. The church, yea, any sister church, have a scripture right to select a committee to try causes and make the report, 1 Cor. vi. or try offenders before the whole body. But as for Peter, he made his defence, rehearsed the matter by order; and the church glorified the Lord, that there was salvation for the Gentiles. Chapter xiii. 48. Here stands a text somewhat difficult for us to understand; some suppose it supports the doctrine of partial election; but that idea would contradict many plain texts. Some say it is not a plain translation; but let the scripture interpret itself; thus, when the apostles told the Jews how they had dispised and refused eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles. This made the Gentiles glad, and they glorified the word of the Lord: being thus prepared by grace, chosen in the mind of the Lord, they only wanted light and were easily brought to believe, being thus prepared. Therefore, as many of the great concourse as were thus qualified, believed that day.

CHAPTER XV.

Paul and Barnabus went round, confirming souls, persuading the christians to continue in the grace, or favour of God. Why did he not tell them they could not fall from grace? Answer, Because he spake by the spirit of truth. People may depart from the faith, saith the spirit. Men may turn from the holy commandment, as Peter saith.

Look forward. The distress which arose about circumcision, caused the great council to be called in Jerusalem, in that one case of emergency. What calls our attention here is, whether this was a new revelation, as it was a new thing; or only a case of emergency. I suppose it necessary only in cases of the like; not to make laws, but to settle disputes. We have a people in our civil union, who hold the christian name, and undertake to hold religious union, though every one is to enjoy his own liberty, and preach and teach his own doctrine and his different faith. One may preach Christ a creature, the other may preach Christ

the creator, yet break no union! One holds John's baptism, which existed under the law; another holds the gospel baptism, which commenced at Pentecost; yet all is union! One will preach infant baptism, the other deny its validity; another holds the right mode to be immersion, the other baptises by effusion; and another tells his hearers that water baptism is obsolete: yet all in good fellowship! They aim at a work as hard to accomplish as to illustrate and show thee perpetual motion. They answer the inspired prophet Amos in the affirmative, that two can walk together though not agreed! They aim to reconcile light and darkness. Our Lord affirms, that a house divided against itself cannot stand; but they suppose it can. Paul wrote that there must be no schism in the body. They hold, all may be schism, yet all be in union, though the joints be so dislocated. Truth says, "be of one mind;" "speak the same thing." They say, all is union, though different faiths! God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for them. In order to finish the story respecting the great council at Jerusalem, we ask, who composed the assembly? The answer is, apostles, elders, and laity, even the whole church. The decision was by inspiration; therefore the minutes of that council are pure scripture.

CHAPTER XVI.

In the 14th verse my reader will see the propriety of household baptism. Some people say, Lydia's household were all believing adults; we wait for proof. The next subject that calls our attention is a subject of dispute, that is the story of the jailor, his baptism, with his household. This report, as to the true order of it, is still in dispute; it requires serious attention. First. It is well known, and men of reading are my witnesses, that in those days, the cities were well walled in against the enemy; iron gates, or brass gates, with locks and bolts, at least two sets of guards round the prison walls; besides watchmen going about the city, exclaiming the hour of the night. Secondly. Those jails had several departments, besides the jailor's house, joined to the prison, with his necessary rooms. Thus Paul and Silas were cast into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks. Thirdly. The preachers prayed and sang praises; and other prisoners in their de-

partments heard the ministers praising God, with their bloody backs. See here, my honest friend, what a proof of the propriety of vocal singing. Who art thou thus to gain-say?

Fourthly. Their prayer reached heaven, and God shook the earth, and the foundations of the prison were made to quiver. The jailer's part also shook, which awakened him and his family—all the doors flew open—the city awfully alarmed—guards deeply affected! But how did they know what hour of the night it was? Answer, the watchmen cried aloud the hour. Midnight, says the word.

Fifthly. It tells of the jailer's condition and sudden conversion; and also of his orderly conduct. He brought the preachers out of the stocks into a room, perhaps his dwelling, and they preached Jesus to all in his house; if he had infants they were part of the family, if they were not capable of understanding, they were capable of being sealed. And the same hour, the jailor washed their stripes, and he and all his, straightway, during the hour of twelve, a little before one o'clock, were baptised.

Sixthly. Then he brought them into his dining room, it is probable, and fed them; he rejoiced in and with his family. Soon as day appeared, the affrighted 'squires being informed that the preachers were safe, sent the serjeants of the guards to order that those men be let go; not knowing what had privately happened. Paul refused to go out, saying, let the magistrates come and fetch us out. They through fear did so, and bid them leave the city, &c.

If any man in his senses can believe that the family were carried, at that hour, through guards and gates, in the dark or with lamps, (the city alarmed) to a suitable water, with garments on or naked, were dipped, and went back through all, undiscovered—and Paul also, to play the hypocrite, even refuse to go out in the morning: to believe in the doctrine of immersion from this report, is to read one way and believe another.

CHAPTER XVII.

In this chapter you will find remarks on three particular points. First, The noble conduct of the noble Berians. They heard Paul preach the faith of Christ, the doctrine of the resurrection; but they could not understand him, and they were of too noble a principle to condemn what they

could not understand, and they were too careful of their souls to risque their salvation on a mere implicit faith: therefore they acted under the influence of wisdom and prudence; memorised the substance of the doctrine, searched the scriptures of Moses and the prophets, from whence Paul drew his proofs; and many were converted and joined the order.

Secondly. The heathens were under an impression that there was a Supreme, but knew him not; as the inscription testified, viz. "To the unknown God."

The third point is, We are all the offspring of the creator God, as the God of nature. Adam was the created son of God, and his soul was breathed into him; thus all bodies and souls came from the first body and soul: as God saith, "all souls are mine." And God in essence fills all duration; and therefore the way to come to the knowledge of him, is to feel after him by faith, in spirit, till happily your soul may find him in love, peace and joy. As our life is in his hand, I think it strange we are not more afraid of him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CANDID reader, notice how the Lord, according to his foreknowledge, speaks of things before they are seen by us, as though they were. Paul was encouraged to speak on, saying, no man should hurt you, for "I have much people in this city." He saw their willing, teachable, coming souls. Some will urge, that these were partially elected from the foundation! Observe, election is of grace, and grace appears to all, teaching us. Those who will come to the light become the elect, through the sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience; but those who refuse the light, and choose darkness, do remain reprobates concerning the faith.

The next remark is this, the story of Apollos, an eloquent speaker, proving that Jesus was the true Messiah, agreeable to the prophets; he being versed in the prophecies respecting Jesus, answering the description of the true Messiah. But Luke observes, he knew only the baptism of John. This is the interpretation: Apollos was one of John's disciples, and he joined the christian church as John intended. He knew that John baptised unto repentance, as a preparative for the new kingdom. The gospel baptism, and the mysteries of the new kingdom, he did not comprehend.

As great an orator as he was, private members could teach him. The church gave him a recommendation, and he did much good. Notice the 27th verse. The people believed through grace. The divine light is saving grace, it teaches and produces faith; but those who choose darkness, can never come to be believers.

CHAPTER XIX.

My reader will see in this section, unless he closes his eyes, that the baptism of John was not, and therefore is not, the gospel baptism. John lived just in the close of the old dispensation, and in course ought to have ended near eighteen hundred years ago. Some of John's disciples joined the christian church in the town of Ephesus. Paul in his travels found them there, and asked, if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed? They answered saying, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. This appeared strange, that people should come out from among Jews and infidels, and take the new name, and never hear of the Holy Ghost. But they only had received John's baptism.

CHAPTER XX.

The primitive church is here called "the church of God" —purchased with his own blood: by reason, the humanity was God's humanity, which must be divine; for, "God was in Christ." Emanuel was God with us. Again: Paul called the preaching elders together, and gave them a solemn charge to take heed to themselves, and to the church, the flock united under care and government. Paul predicted what would certainly come to pass if those ministers disregarded the apostle's counsel; and it came to pass as the man of God had said. Many among the elders, (prelates were not born) were overseers to feed and lead the flock, not lords; they were the successors of the apostles, some of whom, who thirsted for dominion, wrested the scriptures, perverted the sense, and drew off disciples from the simplicity of the gospel, and made divisions contrary to the doctrine which they had learned. Perhaps not over fifty years after the apostles, the evil begun; but the most fatal of all the innovations was that carried on by an elder of

Alexandria, whose name was Arius; who exclaimed, saying, Jesus Christ was a mighty one—but not the Supreme. He gained proselytes rapidly, and having gained the emperor with the civil power on his side, he raised a desperate persecution against the followers of the old primitive track, who adored Christ as a very God, manifest in the flesh. These Arians held the christian name, but bore the fruit of savage cruelty—wolves in sheep's clothing, called christians. Socinius denied the resurrection of the body, but was hard set to wrest the first of John's gospel, that the word that was made flesh was God. He perverted it, by saying, that the word was with God in unity of affection, but not in essence; and that Jesus was God only by office. But those greatly differed in other notions. A late company of people, low down in Virginia, near Norfolk, whose circular I have read, hold the Lord Jesus to be a great creature, but not equal to God the Father. They exclaim that their brethren may be part arians, part socinians, part trinitarians, yet remain in perfect union! Every minister may preach his own faith, baptize any way, or no way, yet all is union. Among the rest, I saw the name of Mr. Tate, and was made to wonder and to sorrow. They exclaim, "the christian church." They went out from us. We pray for them, that they may return. Those people are trying to reconcile light and darkness, truth and error; and to answer the prophet Amos, ii. 2. that two can walk together, though not agreed—as observed. Paul directs us to be of one mind, in unity of faith, and have no schisms in the body: but those men tolerate all schism. Jude writes thus: Build up each other in the most holy faith. Those build up in unholy, or corrupt faith. One builds, the other pulls down! How is their church to be edified? Our Lord says, a house divided against itself cannot stand—it is a Babel. Those are found in the north, east and west. Let all men know, that those who call themselves "the christian church," but refuse to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father, are not of us. Some of those in the west make light of the doctrine of atonement and intercession; but all pretend to be united in one body, though dislocated.

We trust that the eternal Jehovah Jesus will raise up men of the pure order, to contend in the spirit of meekness against error, confusion, and anarchy. These men of *any* faith, say the bible is our rule of faith and government.

Reader only look at that.—This confusion is called by these men, "liberty of conscience." Suppose civil citizens were thus tolerated, who could live? Here the rise and progress of episcopacy is sufficiently published, and made appear to be corrupt, as not of God. Human councils fixed a moderator; he became a metropolitan, a papa—father—pope. Those priests that carry on the horrid business of the inquisition, are all honored with the title of father. Let no minister of the gospel order in the christian church, be so called; unless it be by those to whom he is a father in the gospel—but not as a father in the church, on account of his office or age.

CHAPTERS XXI, XXII.

HERE we read of the sufferings of that dear man of God, even Paul, who shunned not, even at the risque of his life, to declare the whole counsel of God, and finally died a martyr for the truth.

The apostle, in making his defence, told his experience, how that Jesus told him, saying, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Notice the love of Christ to his people—persecute a true christian, Christ takes it as done to himself; and every act of kindness done to one of his disciples, he receives it as done to himself—and it will be rewarded now, or hereafter. Candid reader, consider Paul's baptism from a Jew to the christian. Chap. xxii. 16. Just observe how it reads. He was directed to be baptized, and wash away sin. This shows water baptism signifies wash, not dip. Water applied appears most reasonable.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HERE begins Paul's hard law trial before spiteful priests and infidel governors; the accusation was, that he was a heritic, a mover of sedition, a pestilent fellow; away with him from the earth, was the cry. But having obtained liberty to plead his own cause, he displayed his eloquence in such a masterly manner as to draw the attention of the court, though his arms were chained, so that he could not humour the subject as he would have done; but he not only moved the passions but affected their hearts. He boldly charged his accusers with fallacy; for they could not sub-

stantiate what they had reported. He made the governor tremble! He brought the king to be almost a christian! A party of his persecutors were so enraged that they solemnly swore never to eat or drink until they had killed Paul; but his God, who is always above men and devils, delivered him out of their hands. O that serpentine malicious spirit against Christ and his people, happy for us in our day that Satan is so far chained. My reader will observe, in those days, christian was the royal name, which above all names, enraged Satan, Jews and infidels. When a christian was brought to the stake to be executed, (as history reads) he was examined for the last time to see if he would recant and save his life; the last interrogative was, "art thou a christian?" If he answered, I am, he was rushed to the stake, bound and burned. This name was predicted for the new church, near 700 years before the new kingdom came. Isaiah lxv. 15, lxii. 2. A name that Jews and Gentiles put on when baptised by gospel ministers; but not by John the Baptist. Why say some of you, "no matter what name we are called;" this is saying too much. Though names cannot save, yet it is safe to follow the word.

If my friendly reader desires to hear any more of that blessed brother Paul, let him read the remainder of the Acts; see his perils by land, by sea, by his own nation, and infidels. But he fought manfully; run and never fainted; finished his course, and is now where the author hopes soon to be. AMEN.